

Message Text

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72

ORIGIN ARA-20

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 NSAE-00 NSCE-00 SSO-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 SAB-01 DEAE-00 INR-10 IO-14 JUSE-00

RSC-01 SNM-02 SY-10 TRSE-00 NSC-10 SCI-06 OMB-01

PM-07 H-03 L-03 PA-04 PRS-01 SPC-03 SS-20 /117 R

66650

DRAFTED BY: ARA/PAF: GDWALLACE

APPROVED BY: ARA/PAF: GDWALLACE

ARA/PAN: MBELL (DRAFT)

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMEMBASSY PANAMA IMMEDIATE

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 251706

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR PN

SUBJ: SPOKESMAN ON JACK ANDERSON/PANAMA DRUG REPORT

BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED

FOLLOWING IS EXCHANGE AT FRIDAY, DECEMBER 28, STATE DEPARTMENT PRESS BRIEFING:

Q: DID THE STATE DEPARTMENT GET A NARCOTICS AGENT TO SWEAR FALSELY TO SOME STATEMENT ABOUT PANAMANIAN DRUG DEALING IN AN EFFORT TO COVER UP THE PANAMANIAN INVOLVEMENT IN IT?

A: THAT PARTICULAR STORY, THE ALLEGATIONS IN IT ARE TWO YEARS OLD, AND I AM TOLD HAVE BEEN PREVIOUSLY DENIED, PRECISELY. AND I WOULD LIKE TO REPEAT THAT IT IS ABSOLUTELY FALSE THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT OR ANY OTHER U.S. AGENCY RESPONSIBLE FOR NARCOTICS AFFAIRS HAS ANY
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EVIDENCE WHICH WOULD INDICATE THE INVOLVEMENT OF FOREIGN

MINISTER TACK OF PANAMA IN NARCOTICS SMUGGLING.

Q: JUST TO NAIL IT DOWN, YOU ARE TALKING ABOUT JACK ANDERSON'S COLUMN THIS MORNING?

A: I AM TALKING ABOUT JACK ANDERSON'S STORY OF THIS MORNING.

Q: BACK ON THE PANAMANIAN THING, I THINK ONE OF THOSE THINGS IN THERE WAS AN ALLEGATION THAT THE STATE DEPARTMENT WAS INVOLVED IN THE COVER-UP WHEREBY A NARCOTICS AGENT WAS FORCED TO WRITE A LETTER EXONERATING THE FOREIGN MINISTER FORCED PRESUMABLY AGAINST HIS WILL. I KNOW THERE WAS A LETTER. I ASSUME THE LETTER CLEARED HIM AND WAS NOT AGAINST HIS WILL, IS THAT RIGHT?

A: I WOULD HAVE TO LOOK FURTHER INTO THE STORY. THE ESSENTIAL INFORMATION WHICH I GOT AT THE LAST MINUTE THIS MORNING MERELY STATED SIMPLY THAT --

Q: IT IS NOT TRUE.

A: THAT IT IS NOT TRUE. I DON'T HAVE DETAILS THAT GO BEYOND THAT POINT, WHICH I GAVE YOU. END UNCLASSIFIED

BEGIN CONFIDENTIAL:

THE CHARGE D'AFFAIRES IS REQUESTED TO TRANSMIT AS PROMPTLY AS POSSIBLE TO FOREIGN MINISTER TACK THE VERBATIM TEXT OF THE FIRST AND SECOND QUESTIONS AND THE FIRST AND SECOND ANSWERS IN THE FOREGOING EXCHANGE, IN ACCORDANCE WITH TACK'S REQUEST. CHARGE SHOULD ALSO CONVEY APPRECIATION FOR FOREIGN MINISTER'S REACTION TO BELL MESSAGE WHICH CHARGE EARLIER CONVEYED TO HIM. END CONFIDENTIAL. KISSINGER

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: X
Capture Date: 01 JAN 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: DRUGS, NARCOTICS, SMUGGLING, PRESS COMMENTS, PRESS CONFERENCES
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 28 DEC 1973
Decaption Date: 01 JAN 1960
Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Authority: morefirh
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 28 MAY 2004
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1973STATE251706
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: ARA/PAF: GDWALLACE
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Film Number: n/a
From: STATE
Handling Restrictions: n/a
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1973/newtext/t1973122/aaaaabdw.tel
Line Count: 96
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE
Office: ORIGIN ARA
Original Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Original Handling Restrictions: n/a
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 2
Previous Channel Indicators:
Previous Classification: CONFIDENTIAL
Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Reference: n/a
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Authority: morefirh
Review Comment: n/a
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 23 JAN 2002
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review History: RELEASED <23-Jan-2002 by martinjw>; APPROVED <07 MAR 2002 by morefirh>
Review Markings:

Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
30 JUN 2005

Review Media Identifier:
Review Referrals: n/a
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: SPOKESMAN ON JACK ANDERSON/PANAMA DRUG REPORT BEGIN UNCLASSIFIED
TAGS: PFOR, PN
To: PANAMA
Type: TE
Markings: Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 30 JUN 2005